

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Randy L. Filiault, Vice-Chair
Robert J. O'Connor
Stephen L. Hooper
Gary P. Lamoureux

Staff Present:

Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director
Elizabeth Fox, Human Resources Director
Don Lussier, City Engineer
Brian Costa, Police Chief
Elizabeth (LB) Brown, Youth Services Director
Lesley Collier, Keene Police Department

Mayor Kendall Lane

Members Not Present:

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1) Yvonne Gilbertson – Request for Raised Crosswalk – 21 Roxbury St.

Chair Manwaring asked Ms. Gilbertson to speak. Yvonne Gilbertson, from Central Square Terrace, stated that there is a major problem to cross the street. She continued that as soon as drivers cross the corner it is like a race track to them. People try to cross the street, including handicapped people and elderly people, and drivers just keep on going. With new development there will soon be a lot of children in the area. She and others see it as a danger to everyone. Some people cannot move as fast as the cars. They are asking for some kind of assistance to put something there to help the situation. They would like a speed bump or a light like the one on West Street. Maybe they could put something in like what the college has, with the speed bump and light, but she was told that probably would not happen. Some kind of raised crosswalk would hopefully lessen the problems.

Don Lambert, of 5 Central Square, stated that in the summer of summer 2014 an elderly man was hit by a speeding vehicle. He continued that the pedestrian was in the center of the crosswalk. He was crossing very legally and yet was thrown 20 feet down the road. He (Mr. Lambert) witnessed it. The person who struck the pedestrian was found not guilty because his view was obstructed by a parked vehicle and nothing was ever done. Repeatedly, motorcycles go down that road at 60 miles per hour. Someone will get killed, either there or down the street. To witness it at night, it sounds exactly like a race

track. If you try to cross, maybe one motorist will stop; the others speed by. He feels in danger while crossing that street. There are a lot of elderly people. Many of the people who live in the building (on Roxbury Street) can barely walk. They need help.

Chair Manwaring asked for staff to speak about this situation.

City Engineer Don Lussier stated that he has reviewed the application since it came through the City Council last week. He continued that listening to the stories tonight, he hears that vehicles are not stopping for people in the crosswalk, which is state law, and there are visibility issues, with drivers not seeing pedestrians. To him this indicates that there are some sightline issues to look at. The petitioner raised a good point about new development – next week the Planning Board will hear MoCo Arts' plans for building at the former middle school site. It warrants a look at pedestrian access and safe crossings. He has not had the opportunity to do the homework and look at speeds, pedestrian volumes, and that sort of thing. He suggests the committee put this on more time to give staff time to gather more facts and research this more, talk with each other, and come back to the MSFI Committee with a better plan.

Councilor O'Connor asked how many cycles they would need. Mr. Lussier replied that he would prefer two cycles. One cycle would give them three weeks. They could come back with some suggestions in that amount of time but might not have a definitive plan by then with details and cost estimates.

Ms. Gilbertson stated that the crosswalk that goes to the sidewalk across from the antique place is like a dead end. She continued that the crosswalk does not match up with the sidewalk, which means that people with wheelchairs and walkers have to go out into the street to get onto the sidewalk. Chair Manwaring replied that that is good information for staff to have; the Public Works Department will take a look at it and come up with a good plan.

Councilor Hooper stated that he would echo the request for two cycles. He continued that there are a lot of issues to assess. There are a lot of safety issues and they do not want to rush through this. They want to be thorough.

Councilor Foliault stated that two cycles is more than enough time. He continued that there is history. There was a serious accident in this area several years ago. He can also say from experience that this particular sidewalk has safety concerns. Last Thursday he and other people were halfway across the crosswalk when a driver on a cell phone went flying by them. When MoCo Arts is there it will be a heavily used crosswalk. Asking the City Council to do something about the safety of this crosswalk/street is reasonable, whether the request is for lights, a raised crosswalk, or both. The MSFI Committee is saying to staff that they expect something to happen. This is dangerous. When coming from downtown onto Roxbury Street, drivers accelerate, and drivers going from Roxbury Street into the roundabout also accelerate, trying to make it through the green light. He encourages staff to come back to the committee in two cycles.

Chair Manwaring asked if the public had any more comments. Hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee placed the request for a raised crosswalk at 21 Roxbury Street on more time for two cycles.

2) Periodic Update from the Partner City Committee

Tom Link, Chair of the Partner City Committee (PCC), stated that the PCC was the brainchild of Mayor Russell in the late 1990s and was put into implementation by Mayor Blastos in 2000. He continued that it became official and was signed by Mayor Blastos and the Bürgermeister from Einbeck in 2002. Einbeck is a city of about 27,000 people, in northern Germany, internationally known for its lovely timber frame housing and its beer, brewed there since 1351. The PCC is an official City committee, with members appointed by the Mayor. The committee is used for promoting educational, cultural, athletic, business, and intergovernmental partnerships between Keene and Einbeck. Mayors from both cities have visited each other with delegations, as have members of Keene's medical community; the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments; students; soccer teams, and so on and so forth. Through the exchange, lifestyle similarities are explored, local culture is experienced by people living with host families in one another's countries, and bonds are nurtured between young people, adults, and families from both cities. The Keene PCC and Einbeck PCC have an ongoing, three year collaborative plan, which is updated yearly. In spring 2016, a Keene delegation including Mayor Lane, folks from the Keene Police Department (KPD) and Cheshire Medical Center, the Public Works Director, students, and others visited Einbeck, and students from Einbeck visited Keene's Cheshire Career Center in the fall of 2015.

Mr. Link continued that he invited folks who went to and hosted people from Einbeck to speak tonight about their personal experiences and how they feel this partnership benefits the City of Keene.

Lesley Collier, of 60 Troy Hill Road, Swanzey, NH, stated that she went to Einbeck on behalf of the KPD and had a great time. She continued that she learned a lot, staying with a Police Officer and his wife. She visited the police station and the town, and had great discussions with the Police Officer and his wife during that week of living with them, on topics such as immigration issues and how police work is done in Einbeck and how it compares to police work in Keene. The cultural experience was incredible. In two weeks, her hosts from Einbeck are coming here, and staying at her family's home in Swanzey – they cannot wait to return the favor and show them the American side of things.

Mr. Link stated that there folks here from the Cheshire Career Center. He continued that vocational programs in Germany are formal and well done. They felt that Cheshire

Career Center students could benefit from learning how they do things in Germany. Einbeck students spent almost two weeks at the Cheshire Career Center as well.

John Mitchell, of 6 Hilltop Drive, Keene, stated that the easy part of this discussion is the cultural exchange - individuals are richly rewarded. He continued that it was a wonderful experience for the individuals. From his perspective as an educator, he feels as though this is a great place to talk about the partnership. The MSFI Committee supports the City and he feels that way as an educator, too. He wants to help young people. This is a remarkable experience, to be able to travel to another country and meet with these students. Everyone sees the news and is concerned about the world and the future, but in this time in our world it is extra important to make these bridges. The world is not like what everyone sees on TV all the time. This is very important for young people. The partnership supports not just young people, but the broader community, too. It will change the debate in our community.

Kathleen Polifrone, of 415 Stone Pond Road in Marlborough, stated that it is a pleasure and honor to be part of this Einbeck community. She continued that she works as an assistant in the Culinary Arts program at the Cheshire Career Center. Her son, as a Keene student, was able to go to Einbeck, and she and her family had a guest from Einbeck stay with them in the fall. It is amazing to see the friendships unfold. It was a great opportunity for all the students who got to meet and interact with one another. When Keene students traveled to Einbeck, they got to meet and talk with some Syrian refugees, and shared these stories when they came back to Keene – about what is different, and about how so much is the same. People have made lifelong friendships through this partnership. She continued that when she and others went to Einbeck, they met with members of Einbeck's parliament. It is one thing to read about what is happening in another part of the world, but to be a part of it, to come back and spread that, that is real life. It transfers to everyone, not just the students who went. Many of the students who went to Einbeck will probably stay in the Keene area, and thus enrich Keene with what they experienced in Einbeck. She could talk for many hours about what this partnership has meant to the students. It is something that gets inside of you. It is a special experience. It is up to people who have experienced it to be ambassadors.

Matthew Polifrone, of 415 Stone Pond Road in Marlborough, NH, stated that he went to Einbeck in April. He continued that he was nervous at first about meeting a lot of new people, but when he heard that he had the opportunity to do this he was excited. When students from Einbeck came to Keene, he enjoyed showing them around town, all the businesses and his favorite places and what the community has to offer. They noticed that the fountain in Central Square is dedicated to Einbeck. The trip to Germany changed his thinking about the world. It was culture shock to go somewhere with all of the old buildings. Life was really simple there. He saw a lot of renewable energy, and everything smelled clean, and he saw no trash on the streets, and no homeless people. He spoke with Syrian refugees, speaking with one of them for two and a half hours. It was great to learn about his culture and where he came from. They went to a restaurant run by Syrian refugees and Turkish people. It was great to find a place where everyone got

along. He plans on staying in Keene and wants to bring the values and ideas from Einbeck back to the Keene community.

Randy Burns, of 28 Athol Road, Richmond, NH, stated that he is a Buildings Trade teacher at the Cheshire Career Center. He continued that he entertained Einbeck students in October and also went to Einbeck in April. He could spend hours talking about it. If anyone has an opportunity to go, he strongly recommends it. He had never been to Europe before this trip, and many of the Keene students had never been on a plane. People are the same everywhere - people found that to be true no matter the cultural differences. When the German students were here, you could really see Keene students show their pride in their own community, taking the German students around and really being proud. He saw the reverse, too. The partnership makes students appreciate where they are. It made him appreciate his situation more. He saw the reciprocity with the German students. It was a great experience. He recommends it to anyone, young or old. People will receive you in the sister city.

Public Works Director Kürt Blomquist stated that he participated last year. He continued that they may talk about the old infrastructure here in Keene, but Germany's infrastructure is often three times as old as Keene's. Some of the problems are very similar. The focuses are different. It is interesting. In Keene we deal with historic issues, but Einbeck's make Keene's seem very young. He had an opportunity to visit several businesses in Einbeck, talking about the activities and the commonalities. He spent a lot of time in the downtown area and with Einbeck's Public Works Department staff. It is fascinating to see that many of the issues they face are also ones we face in Keene, and Einbeck focuses on issues Keene does not, like taking care of things to enable pedestrian activity in the winter. He now tells his staff, yes, it can be done! The focus on parks and cemeteries is also a little different in Einbeck – they have park facilities designed for adults, not just children. That is something Keene is just starting to focus on. He will host the Purchasing Agent and his wife when they come to Keene. There will also be a visiting wastewater operator coming to Keene, and when he (Director Blomquist) was in Einbeck he toured Einbeck's wastewater treatment plant. Director Blomquist continued that he recommends that the City Council continue to support and participate in Keene's partnership with Einbeck.

Mayor Kendall Lane stated that he can only reiterate what has already been said. He continued that he had the opportunity to go to Einbeck last fall. It is an incredible experience and the hospitality is far beyond anything that Keene can provide in return. It is not only the cultural exchanges, but also the government exchanges. He was there for the opening of Einbeck's fall festival. They have sister cities in addition to Keene, one each in France, Poland, East Germany, and Austria. The mayors from all of the communities were there. They had a chance to compare notes and talk with each other. Keene's involvement with Einbeck is a huge benefit for the community, culturally and socially. One person who is not here tonight, and no longer specifically with the program, is Wally Secord - he ran soccer exchanges for a long time.

Mayor Lane continued that someone from Einbeck will be staying with him next week. He has come several times and thoroughly enjoys it here in Keene. There will be several opportunities for members of the community and the City Council to participate with people from Einbeck, who are easy going and easy to talk with; they all speak English to some degree. The opportunity to meet them and share experiences with them is invaluable for the city. It is a program that has continued to grow, expand, and prosper. When he went last fall it was an eye-opening experience and he began to get a much bigger vision of what the benefits are and what Keene gains from the relationship. He hopes that all MSFI Committee members and City Council members can participate with people from Einbeck when they are here. They have looked into being able to sell Einbeck's beer here in NH. There are a lot of hurdles and it might not happen. It is a world class beer and he encourages people to try it if they can. Mayor Lane shared an anecdote about how the US Army avoided bombing Einbeck because the brewery was in the center of the city. He concluded that he is looking forward to the upcoming visit – it will be a great opportunity.

Mr. Link thanked the MSFI Committee for listening to the thoughts of people who have experienced the cultural exchange with Einbeck. He continued that a delegation from Einbeck will be in Keene from September 30 to October 8. The City Council members are invited to a welcoming event on October 3 at 6:00 PM. There will be a fundraising event at Fireworks on October 4 at 5:30 PM. Fireworks will give all of the profits from that night to the PCC. They will serve German food in addition to their other menu. The Fall Festival is happening October 1 and Einbeck people will be there; folks from Keene's PCC will be selling Bratwurst. He encourages everyone to stop by.

Councilor Filiault stated that he is proud to be a lifetime resident of Keene and this partnership is a great example of why. They are in a little corner in the woods in NH and yet they have this great experience. He appreciates everything everyone has done to get it to this point and he looks forward to it expanding even more.

Councilor Hooper stated that he echoes what Councilor Filiault said. He continued that he is looking forward to hearing more about this. Tonight's presentation was excellent. Keene represents the philosophy of building bridges, not walls, and this is a wonderful opportunity to get the message out through the students who have participated and the community at large.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the Partner City Committee update as informational, with pride.

3) Final Report – Drug Addictions Solutions Committee

Mayor Lane stated that they have the report from the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Drug Addiction Solutions. He continued that they presented to the City Council last

week and wanted to follow up on that. The drug problem continues, which is probably no surprise to anyone. The efforts to try and mitigate the problem also continue day to day. This was an attempt by the City of Keene to assist in moving forward with a variety of potential ways that it could be mitigated. The value of the special committee, of which Councilor Filiault was a co-chair, is that it brought together people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and people approaching the problem in a variety of ways. It provided an opportunity for people in education, people in agencies, and first responders who have to deal with the problem on a day to day basis to come together. He thanked Brian Costa, Police Chief, and Mark Howard, Fire Chief, for actively participating in the committee and not sending someone else to do it. They personally attended on a very regular basis and it was a tremendous opportunity for everyone to work through how these problems are being addressed. There were a number of interagency efforts that are currently being made - not a result of the committee work, per se, but an opportunity for them to work together to find ways to mitigate the problem. The committee was very valuable and important. He wants to point out that it is not his intention to reappoint the committee at this point. The interagency work needs to continue but it is not necessary to continue it as a formal City committee. He will be continuing to work with the agencies that were involved to make sure that the interagency connections that have developed continue into the future, perhaps in a somewhat less bureaucratic way so the valuable discussions continue.

Mayor Lane continued that the committee developed recommendations that the City Council can continue to follow up on. This is not complete. It is a continuing issue that they need to continuously work on. It will always be facing the city. The City needs to continue to be vigilant, and evolve, and play a role. It is important that the City not get in the way of the work being done by other agencies, but support the efforts.

Chief Costa stated that it was a 26-member committee and he thanks the Mayor for making this a priority and appointing this committee. He continued that when the KPD presented its budget narrative, it included two priorities: positively influencing the heroin problem in the community, and quality of life issues. It became evident with the appointment of this committee that it is a community-wide priority. It is true that you cannot enforce your way out of this problem. It is also true that you cannot do any one thing to solve this problem. It cannot be just treatment. It cannot be just prevention. It has to be through a community like this, with all agencies that have a stake in it working together. There needs to be prevention education, enforcement, and treatment. Education needs to start well before high school, and be age-appropriate beginning in elementary school. Enforcement efforts are towards those individuals or groups who live in or come to the city and choose to sell the product to make money off of it.

Chief Costa continued that treatment is pretty much lacking in New Hampshire. There has been a lot in the mix in the past year to change that but that will not happen overnight. In his remarks, Dr. Montero talked about the 1115 Waiver program, which will bring \$30 million dollars to the state, each in the next 5 years. It has several objectives. Its goal is to change the way behavioral, mental health, and substance misuse services are administered. The first public meeting is on March 7. There have been a lot

of meetings leading up to this point. The waiver was just obtained about two months ago. The first public meeting will be for information that will figure out what that means, what this money has the potential to mean for the State. That will be important.

Elisabeth (LB) Brown, Youth Services Director, stated that being a liaison has been an honor. She continued that looking at all the different notes that came by, one can see the absolute dedication of everyone coming to the table month after month. This is a huge crisis; it is not easy, and will not be resolved in a year or two. Everyone at the table took this seriously and wants the best for this community. A lot of people showed pride. They do not have a lot of money to deal with this, or infrastructure treatment facilities, but everyone keeps coming to the table trying to help people. That says a lot about the community. She works a lot with the state. The Keene region is always known for stepping up and being the forerunner with these types of issues. They are recognized all over the state for not waiting for the State, not waiting for money to appear, but taking the first step forward and trying to make things happen. It solidified for this group that they will keep going no matter what.

Ms. Brown continued that one recommendation is to support innovation and prevention efforts earlier with youth. She went on to share the exciting news that Senate Bill 533 is putting additional funds into the alcohol fund. That will help the state diversion programs with outreach for the Police Department and develop an evidence based screening tool for alcohol and drugs. The State was so impressed with Keene's diversion program and recidivism rates that the State will reimburse them for doing a good job and screening youth at an earlier age. Most of the youth that they find coming through diversion may have a charge of something different than alcohol or drug possession but over half of these youth are using drugs and/or alcohol. This is statewide. The Governor and Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment will have to vote and approve it, but this money will be available hopefully very soon. Part of the planning process is coming up with a team. People from this ad hoc committee will be happy to help her, as the coordinator of the diversion team, so they can get appropriate funding, and reaching out for referrals from the police departments and such. The group talked a lot about police and responders and agencies but there was also a public factor in the ad hoc committee, which they do not necessarily hear a lot. It was a rich experience. When you're on the inside doing your job you might not remember the frustrations and joys of being helped, when you're on the outside. This is a great group to wrap around this issue. They are ready to go forth and continue the good work.

Mayor Lane stated that the last page of the report has recommendations such as supporting legislation. He continued that if they want treatment facilities in NH they need to think about supporting permanent Medicaid expansion. That is critical in encouraging investment in treatment facilities on a long term basis. There are 50,000 people getting Medicaid because of the expansion. In two years people will not invest in treatment facilities if the expansion is only on a two year basis. There will be legislation introduced this coming legislative session and they will come to the City Council for assistance and support of that legislation. There will be other things coming up that they will be asking the MSFI Committee and the City Council to support.

Councilor Phil Jones thanked the committee for all of that they did. He continued that he attended some meetings. He was honored to be the emcee for the Tapestry of Hope summit. He encourages reading the book *Chasing the Scream*. The author, Johann Hari, was the guest speaker at the summit. A quote from it is: "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is human connection." That is what this ad hoc committee is doing, and they look forward to future work.

Chair Manwaring stated that she was a member of the ad hoc committee, too, although could not always attend, due to a schedule conflict. She continued that she knew coming into it that "you cannot arrest your way out of this," and she was excited to hear, too, that they cannot medicate their way out of this. It is about treatment, prevention, education; it is, like Councilor Jones just said, about connection. She thanked them for their work.

Mayor Lane stated that when he was setting this committee up, there was not a single person whom he asked who said no. Everyone wanted to be a part of it. Congresswoman Kuster did a roundtable at Cheshire Medical Center and learned about efforts they are making locally and used this as a model throughout the state, for how communities should address this problem. The community should recognize that by making themselves aware of the nature of the problem, and being willing to work to mitigate the impacts of it and work towards wellness for the individuals who are suffering from addiction, they are doing work that is recognized beyond this community and other communities are using Keene as a model. Chair Manwaring praised Mayor Lane for keeping the focus on solutions, which is important.

Councilor Filiault stated that he compliments Mayor Lane. He continued that he and Councilor Clark talked with Councilor Greenwald and the Mayor about this a few years ago and he thanks the Mayor for listening and taking action, realizing that this will not be a glossy, good news headline, nor will it go away with one-liners. What Congresswoman Kuster has learned from Keene is now what they are seeing in national bills. A lot of what she is addressing came from Keene. The heroin epidemic is national. He compliments the Mayor and Congresswoman Kuster for addressing this head on. Nothing was white washed or glossed over. The committee, like the Mayor said, has wound up but the problem has not. He applauds the Mayor and the committee.

Mayor Lane stated that Chief Costa and Chief Howard testified in Washington, D.C. in connection with this. Chief Costa stated that he went to speak about one of the programs, the Cheshire County Addiction Assisted Recovery Initiative. He continued that executive officers from 20 police departments partnering with the program were invited to D.C., to try and persuade Congress to pass a funding bill. A significant portion of it would be earmarked for NH. Congress did not pass the bill and said it was not because they do not recognize the national need. There were other reasons that held it up. But the funding is coming nationally and to the state and that was just one further mechanism of proof that this is a national epidemic, not just a NH one. NH is a player, obviously, since they were invited to speak. The ad hoc committee can feel good about its work but this is just the beginning.

Mayor Lane thanked Ms. Brown for guiding the ad hoc committee through the process in the past year. He continued that she was recently named one of the Extraordinary Women in Cheshire Country, an honor that is well deserved. This work is not always an easy process or a straight line but she stuck with them and moved them forward and he very much appreciates her efforts. Chair Manwaring thanked her, too.

Councilor Filaault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the Drug Addictions Solutions Committee's report as informational.

4) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker